

Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 OMB-01 OPR-02 SCCT-01 SCA-01 SCS-03

SY-05 USSS-00 A-01 /085 W
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R 251855Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2480

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 21823

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FR PINT PBOR

SUBJECT: DISTURBANCES IN CORSICA

REF: PARIS 21701

1. A POLICE ASSAULT ON THE ARC-HELD WINE COOPERATIVE OF SOVINCOR AT ALERIA AT 16:10 ON 22 AUGUST RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF TWO GENDARMES. SPEAKING FOR ARC, DR. EDMOND SIMEONI SURRENDERED TO THE POLICE; BUT WHILE NEGOTIATIONS WERE TAKING PLACE, NEARLY ALL THE AUTONOMISTS MANAGED TO ESCAPE, MANY OF THEM WITH THEIR WEAPONS. THEY SET FIRE TO THE COOPERATIVE AND NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS AS THEY DID SO. THE SAME NIGHT BASTIA WAS THE SCENE OF NUMEROUS INCIDENTS, INCLUDING ATTACKS ON BANKS,
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AIRLINE OFFICES AND BUSINESSES OWNED BY CONTINENTALS

AND PIEDS-NOIRS. DR. SIMEONI WAS FLOWN TO PARIS AND CURRENTLY AWAITS ARRAIGNMENT BEFORE A COURT OF JUSTICE. IN THE MEANTIME, HIS BROTHER MAX CONTINUES TO MOBILIZE ARC MILITANTS ON THIS ISLAND.

2. PRESS HAS BEEN GENERALLY UNFAVORABLE TOWARDS MICHEL PONIATOWSKI, MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, WHO ALLEGEDLY DIRECTED THE OPERATION PERSONALLY FROM HIS PARIS OFFICE. IT IS GENERALLY FELT THAT WITH A BIT MORE PATIENCE, EVENTS WOULD NOT HAVE RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF TWO POLICEMEN. WHATEVER THE CASE, THE CALM THAT NOW REIGNS IN CORSICA COULD EASILY EXPLODE INTO FURTHER VIOLENCE WHEN SIMEONI IS ARRAIGNED ON THE 27TH. EVEN LIGHT SENTENCING COULD TRANSFORM HIM INTO AN INSTANT HERO IN CORSICA. ANTICIPATING THIS EVENTUALITY, AN ADDITIONAL 200 CRS HAVE BEEN FLOWN TO BASTIA TO KEEP ORDER. GUERIN, THE DEPUTY-PREFECT OF BASTIA WHO PERSONALLY LED THE ATTACK, WAS CALLED TO PARIS SUNDAY ALONG WITH THE COMMANDER OF THE CORSICAN POLICE, THE PURPOSE BEING TO ANSWER TO PONIATOWSKI WHY EVENTS UNFOLDED AS THEY DID. SATISFIED WITH THEIR EXPLANATIONS, PONIATOWSKI ALLOWED THEM TO RETURN TO CORSICA THE SAME DAY.

3. COMMENT: TWO FACTORS EMERGE FROM THESE EVENTS IN CORSICA. FIRSTLY, THE POSITION OF THE AUTONOMISTS HAS HARDENED TO THE EXTENT THAT ARC NOW HOLDS AN ATTITUDE TOWARDS AUTONOMY AND THE MEANS OF ACHIEVING IT WHICH IS NOT FAR REMOVED FROM THAT OF THE RADICAL GHJUSTIZIA PAOLINA. SECONDLY, PONIATOWSKI HAS ONCE AGAIN COME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK, ESPECIALLY IN THE PRESS, FOR HIS TOUGH AND UNCOMPROMISING STAND ON LAW AND ORDER. HE IS NO DOUBT CONCERNED THAT OTHER FIRE-SPOTS ON THE CONTINENT, SUCH AS MARSEILLE WITH ITS 100,000 CORSICANS, COULD EASILY ERUPT, BRINGING THE PROBLEM CLOSER TO HOME. PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC HAS DEPLORED THESE ACTS THAT BRING "NATIONAL UNITY" INTO QUESTION, BUT THE GRIPES OF THE CORSICANS ARE IN SOME CASES LEGITIMATE. GOF, BECAUSE OF THE EVENTS IN ALERIA, NOW HAS LESS TIME AND LESS MARGIN TO ACT IN ORDER TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE "CORSICAN PROBLEM" THAN IT HAD BEFORE.
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4. REFTTEL BEING REPEATED TO RABAT AND TUNIS.
GAMMON

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NNN

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